Algorithmic Harmony or Superstitious Code? Feng Shui, Artificial Intelligence, and Ideological Control in Modern China

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As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into governance, design, and cultural production, the question of what traditions can be encoded into these systems takes on profound significance. In the context of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which maintains a strict ideological commitment to scientific materialism, the fate of ancient metaphysical systems like Feng Shui reveals deeper tensions between control and cultural continuity. This paper explores whether Feng Shui—a practice rooted in cosmology, spatial symbolism, and energetic harmony—can be permitted in CCP-sanctioned AI systems. While modern AI offers a technical framework for implementing Feng Shui principles in design, architecture, or urban planning, its metaphysical content must be stripped away or reframed as neutral tradition to pass ideological scrutiny. Drawing on the analytical psychology of Carl Jung, this paper argues that such repression of symbolic meaning leads not to elimination, but to unconscious return—often through the very technological systems designed to suppress it. Through case studies and thought experiments, we examine how technocratic power repackages the mystical, and how AI may unknowingly become the next vessel for ancient archetypes.

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I. Introduction

Can Feng Shui—a traditional Chinese practice rooted in metaphysical principles of harmony, orientation, and energy flow—be permitted in CCP-sanctioned artificial intelligence systems? This seemingly narrow question opens a window into a much broader inquiry: how do modern technocratic regimes handle the persistent undercurrents of spiritual and symbolic life within a society they strive to rationalize and control? As artificial intelligence becomes a central tool of governance, development, and social organization, the question of what kinds of knowledge and traditions are allowed to flow through it becomes critical.

Feng Shui occupies a unique place in Chinese culture. It is both ancient and living, both architectural and spiritual. It guides how people position their homes, arrange their offices, and understand their relationship with the cosmos. Yet it also belongs to a category officially labeled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as *mixin*—superstition. In the post-1949 Marxist-Leninist framework adopted by the CCP, spiritual beliefs and metaphysical systems are discouraged or outright banned in favor of materialist, scientific thinking. However, in practice, Feng Shui remains widespread—practiced privately, sometimes semi-officially, and often without open acknowledgment. The state's relationship to it is strategic, ambivalent, and at times paradoxical.

This paper investigates how that tension plays out in the most modern and powerful tool the CCP has ever deployed: artificial intelligence. Specifically, it asks whether—and how—Feng Shui could be integrated into AI systems approved by the Party. Could AI be designed to optimize urban layouts or building interiors based on Feng Shui principles? Would such AI be limited to aesthetics and cultural heritage, or could it encode metaphysical assumptions about space, energy, and human destiny? And crucially, how would the CCP determine the boundary between cultural symbolism and spiritual belief in the context of algorithmic systems?

To explore these questions, this paper applies the psychological framework of Carl Gustav Jung. Jung’s theories of the unconscious, archetypes, and the consequences of repressing the spiritual impulse offer a powerful lens through

which to analyze both the enduring appeal of Feng Shui and the likely consequences of suppressing it within artificial systems. Jung warned that what is repressed in the individual or collective psyche does not vanish—it re-emerges in distorted or unintended forms. From this perspective, the exclusion of symbolic and spiritual elements from AI could produce not neutrality, but imbalance. Conversely, their inclusion—consciously and carefully framed—could enrich AI systems with a layer of cultural and psychological meaning currently absent from technocratic paradigms.

The intersection of Feng Shui, artificial intelligence, and the Chinese state's ideological apparatus presents a rare moment where ancient tradition, psychological depth, and modern control converge. This paper argues that the way China addresses this convergence—particularly through the lens of AI—offers insight not only into the future of Chinese society, but into the global question of whether technological systems can or should carry the symbolic content of the cultures that produce them.

II. The CCP and the Control of Meaning

To understand whether Feng Shui can be permitted in CCP-sanctioned AI, one must first grasp how the Chinese Communist Party defines and controls meaning itself. From its inception, the CCP has regarded belief systems—whether religious, spiritual, or traditional—as powerful tools that either support or threaten the ideological unity of the state. As such, it has spent decades carefully delineating what forms of belief are permissible, which are condemned, and which may be conditionally tolerated if brought into alignment with state priorities.

At the core of the CCP's ideological foundation is dialectical materialism, a Marxist framework that sees history as a progression of class struggles shaped by material conditions rather than spiritual or metaphysical forces. Within this worldview, religion is understood as an instrument of social control used by ruling classes to pacify the oppressed—a sentiment echoed in Marx's famous declaration that religion is the "opiate of the masses." After the establishment of the People's

Republic of China in 1949, the Party began a systematic campaign to eliminate religious influence and replace it with a secular, scientific, and ideologically uniform society.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), this effort reached an extreme. Temples were destroyed, religious texts burned, spiritual leaders humiliated, and all forms of traditional practice were declared "Four Olds"—old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas. Feng Shui, like traditional Chinese medicine and divination, was publicly vilified as a dangerous superstition (*mixin*, 迷信) that hindered socialist progress. Yet despite this official condemnation, many of these practices endured in private life, passed down quietly through families or reemerging in new forms after the political winds shifted.

In the post-Mao reform era, especially under Deng Xiaoping's leadership beginning in the late 1970s, the Party began to tolerate—and in some cases selectively revive—certain traditional practices, especially if they could be framed as non-religious "culture" rather than "superstition." This distinction became critical. A practice labeled *mixin* was subject to suppression; one labeled "cultural heritage" (*wenhua yichan*, 文化遗产) could be celebrated, commodified, and even used for diplomatic soft power. This created a flexible ideological framework where the same practice could be either criminalized or promoted depending on its framing and function.

Feng Shui found itself on the boundary of this divide. When practiced as an architectural or aesthetic principle—helping design buildings that "feel right," promoting harmony, or honoring traditional spatial customs—it could be tolerated as cultural knowledge. However, when practiced as a spiritual or divinatory system that makes claims about fate, fortune, or unseen forces, it risked state disapproval or censure. This dual-status meant that Feng Shui was neither fully permitted nor fully banned, but existed in a gray zone of strategic ambiguity, allowed to flourish privately so long as it remained apolitical and discreet.

In practice, this ambiguity allowed for a wide range of uses. Even CCP officials have been known to consult Feng Shui experts when building ancestral tombs or

selecting sites for development—albeit quietly and without official acknowledgment. At the same time, public promotion of Feng Shui as a system of metaphysical causality remains forbidden, especially if it conflicts with scientific rationalism or undermines Party authority.

This tension between "superstition" and "culture" reflects a broader pattern in the CCP's governance: the selective revival and sanitization of traditional practices to bolster nationalism, cultural continuity, and ideological control. Practices once condemned as feudal relics are repackaged and permitted when they serve state interests—whether in tourism, international diplomacy, or social stability.

As China moves deeper into the era of artificial intelligence, this control over meaning becomes newly relevant. AI is not just a technical tool—it is a cultural and ideological instrument. Its inputs, structures, and decision-making frameworks are shaped by what a society considers real, permissible, and meaningful. The question of whether Feng Shui can be included in CCP-sanctioned AI systems is thus not just a matter of design or functionality—it is a question of ideological control and symbolic power.

III. Feng Shui as Cultural Symbolism

Feng Shui, literally meaning "wind" (風) and "water" (水), is one of the oldest and most enduring systems of traditional Chinese thought. Its foundations reach back over 3,000 years to the early Zhou dynasty and are deeply rooted in Daoist cosmology, Yin-Yang dualism, and the Five Elements (wuxing) theory. While often dismissed by skeptics as superstition, Feng Shui is, in its full expression, a comprehensive symbolic system that unites the physical environment with human well-being, destiny, and cosmic order. It is both a practical design method and a metaphysical worldview, occupying a unique place in Chinese cultural consciousness.

At its core, Feng Shui is concerned with the flow of qi (氣)—the vital life energy that moves through all things. In this framework, the spatial arrangement of homes, buildings, cities, and even graves can either support or obstruct the

harmonious movement of qi. The principles of Feng Shui aim to align human constructions with the natural landscape in ways that maximize health, prosperity, and spiritual balance. Key concepts include:

- Yin and Yang: The balance between opposing yet complementary forces (e.g., light and dark, soft and hard) in any given environment.
- The Five Elements: Wood, fire, earth, metal, and water—each associated with specific directions, colors, and emotional or physiological states.
- The Compass School and the Form School: Two major traditions within Feng Shui that focus on directionality and topography, respectively.
- Orientation and Flow: Placement of doors, windows, furniture, and natural features in ways that guide or block qi.

This system is far more than aesthetic or ergonomic. Feng Shui provides a symbolic map of the cosmos, interpreting architecture, geography, and even time as fields of energetic significance. Decisions about where to live, how to build, and when to act are infused with symbolic meaning. In this sense, Feng Shui functions as a language of the unconscious, deeply resonant with what Carl Jung would call archetypal structures—patterns of meaning that transcend individual cognition and reflect collective psychic experience.

Feng Shui's dual nature—as both a pragmatic design tool and a spiritual or cosmological framework—has allowed it to survive even in periods of ideological repression. In everyday Chinese life, Feng Shui remains a quiet but influential force. Families may consult Feng Shui masters before purchasing a home or arranging a wedding. Businesses may orient desks and doors according to favorable directions. Urban developers sometimes integrate Feng Shui principles to avoid public resistance or gain symbolic legitimacy. Even tomb placement, a matter of deep ancestral importance, continues to be guided by Feng Shui logic.

What makes this persistence notable is that it often occurs in spite of official disapproval. As discussed in the previous section, the Chinese Communist Party has historically condemned Feng Shui as mixin—superstition incompatible with scientific socialism. Yet in practice, the cultural memory of Feng Shui is stronger

than the ideological overlay. It continues not just because of belief, but because of its embeddedness in cultural intuition, aesthetics, and social ritual.

Moreover, the psychological functions of Feng Shui are considerable. It provides people with a sense of order and meaning in a world marked by uncertainty and disruption. Its guidance offers not only comfort but agency—an ability to make deliberate, symbolically coherent decisions about space and life direction. It is, in Jungian terms, a way of projecting the inner psyche onto the outer world—a dynamic that Jung saw as essential to the individuation process.

The question, then, is not whether Feng Shui is still relevant in China—it clearly is—but whether it can be openly expressed in digital form, especially within CCP-sanctioned AI systems. Its survival depends on how its symbolic nature is classified: is it seen as cultural heritage, or as metaphysical deviation? This tension between pragmatic functionality and spiritual symbolism will prove critical as we explore the question of algorithmic inclusion in the sections that follow.

IV. Would the CCP Permit Feng Shui in AI?

At the core of this inquiry lies a paradox: Feng Shui remains deeply embedded in Chinese cultural life, yet its spiritual and metaphysical underpinnings remain ideologically suspect under CCP doctrine. As artificial intelligence becomes a key instrument of both social infrastructure and cultural production, the question arises—could Feng Shui, with its ancient roots in cosmology and energy flow, be integrated into CCP-approved AI systems?

The short answer is yes—but only under strict conditions. As with many aspects of traditional Chinese life, the key determinant is framing. If Feng Shui is presented as a practical, non-spiritual tool that enhances efficiency, aesthetics, or cultural continuity, it may be allowed. But if it is presented as a metaphysical system that challenges or supplants the materialist ideology of the state, it becomes problematic.

Acceptable if Reframed:

Feng Shui can be permitted within AI systems if stripped of its spiritual language and recast as a cultural, design-oriented, or psychological support mechanism. The CCP has shown increasing tolerance for traditional practices that serve to:

- Promote national identity or cultural pride
- Support consumer engagement or economic development
- Improve subjective well-being in ways that can be quantified or secularized

In this context, AI applications that draw on Feng Shui principles may be allowed if they are framed as:

- Cultural Aesthetics: Tools that apply traditional principles for style, ambiance, or symbolic elegance—particularly in architecture, fashion, or urban design
- Design Optimization: Algorithms that suggest spatial arrangements aligned with traditional preferences, without invoking unseen energies or fate
- Psychological Comfort: Enhancements to user experience based on long-standing cultural associations, such as “calmness” or “balance,” without spiritual claims

In this reframed view, Feng Shui becomes a kind of heuristic knowledge—a source of historically derived “best practices” that can be justified on rational, empirical, or cultural grounds.

Likely Modes of Inclusion:

Given these ideological constraints, Feng Shui could appear in CCP-approved AI through several plausible channels:

- Real Estate Recommendation Systems: AI that suggests optimal property choices based on building orientation, natural light, and spatial layout—criteria that align with Feng Shui but can be justified as market preferences or comfort considerations

- Interior Design Applications: Smart home platforms or design assistants that suggest traditional placements of furniture, doors, or beds, under the guise of maximizing efficiency or aesthetic harmony
- Urban Planning Tools: Algorithms that incorporate elements from the Form School of Feng Shui—such as placement near water, shielding from wind, or flow between open spaces—without invoking metaphysical principles
- Cultural Heritage Software: Educational or touristic applications that introduce Feng Shui as part of China's intangible heritage, while avoiding overt endorsement of its spiritual interpretations

In all these cases, language and framing are critical. The more these applications emphasize pragmatic or cultural outcomes—comfort, tradition, efficiency—the more likely they are to be tolerated or even promoted.

Likely Exclusions and Red Flags:

However, there are clear boundaries. Feng Shui cannot be included in AI systems if it functions as a metaphysical or divinatory tool. Red flags that would likely trigger censorship or suppression include:

- References to Spirits or Supernatural Entities: Any mention of ghosts, gods, or ancestral interventions would breach the CCP's materialist framework
- Discussions of Qi as a Cosmic Force: While qi is a foundational concept in Feng Shui, its presence in AI—if framed as more than metaphor—would risk being labeled unscientific or superstitious
- Predictive Claims About Fate or Luck: AI outputs that offer predictions—about wealth, health, misfortune, or death—based on spatial arrangement would be too close to fortune-telling, a prohibited practice
- Algorithmic Spiritual Authority: Any sense that an AI is providing guidance akin to religious or metaphysical advice would be ideologically unacceptable

These exclusions reflect the deeper anxiety of the CCP: that any belief system operating outside of Party doctrine constitutes a potential threat to ideological

cohesion. Even benign cultural practices are scrutinized for their latent ability to generate loyalty, meaning, or authority outside the state.

A Controlled Cultural Symbol

Ultimately, Feng Shui's integration into AI—if it happens—will be highly curated. It will appear only in safe, secularized forms, designed to evoke cultural familiarity while remaining ideologically neutral. The result may be a partial or hollowed-out version of Feng Shui—one that preserves its surface features while stripping it of its symbolic and spiritual depth.

Yet even this curated form can be powerful. In a society where many still carry an unconscious connection to ancient cosmologies, even a symbolic echo of Feng Shui—delivered through AI—may awaken deeper patterns of thought, emotion, and meaning. Whether the CCP is prepared to manage those implications remains an open question.

V. The Jungian Perspective: What Is Suppressed Returns

Carl Gustav Jung, one of the foremost thinkers in depth psychology, warned consistently that the repression of spiritual instincts—whether in individuals or in cultures—leads not to their disappearance but to their unconscious return, often in distorted or dangerous forms. His work emphasized that spiritual and symbolic expressions are not merely cultural artifacts or relics of superstition, but rather manifestations of the deep psyche—of the archetypal forces that govern human behavior, imagination, and meaning-making. To remove or deny these expressions is to dislocate the psyche from its roots in what Jung called the collective unconscious.

Jung observed that modern Western civilization, in its shift toward scientific rationalism, had increasingly disavowed myth, religion, and the symbolic life, resulting in a psychological imbalance. This repression, he believed, was the source of many modern neuroses. The need for transcendence, for symbolic language, and for orientation toward the invisible dimensions of life does not

disappear when ignored—it re-emerges, often violently or irrationally, in mass movements, projections, addictions, and ideologies.

This dynamic, though articulated in the Western context, applies directly to the Chinese Communist Party's approach to metaphysical traditions like Feng Shui. The CCP's ideological commitment to materialism has led to a decades-long effort to separate the Chinese psyche from its ancestral symbolic systems—among them Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and traditional cosmologies. But as Jung would predict, these forces have not vanished. They persist, resurfacing in symbolic form through culture, dreams, aesthetics, and—most relevant here—technological systems.

In Jungian terms, Feng Shui is an archetypal system. It maps the psyche onto space, treating the environment not merely as external matter but as a mirror of internal psychological states. A misaligned room reflects a misaligned soul; a blocked path symbolizes obstructed psychic energy. In this way, Feng Shui operates like a spatial mandala—a symbolic arrangement of elements meant to reflect and cultivate inner harmony. Jung, who explored mandalas extensively, would likely interpret Feng Shui as a form of living symbology, providing the psyche with a structured field for expression and integration.

What happens, then, when such a system is deliberately excluded from AI, or when it is reduced to surface aesthetics with no symbolic or psychic resonance? According to Jung, the result is the dominance of the rational ego—the conscious mind operating under the illusion that it controls and understands all aspects of life. The ego, in this configuration, rejects the non-rational, the symbolic, and the spiritual as irrelevant or threatening. But in doing so, it cuts itself off from the deeper forces of the psyche, which eventually return in the form of shadow projections—the qualities the ego denies in itself, now seen in others or external systems.

An AI system built entirely on this egoic model—rational, utilitarian, secular—may appear "clean" and "neutral," but it is, in Jung's framework, dangerously incomplete. It lacks access to the symbolic depth that makes human consciousness whole. Worse still, when people interact with such AI systems in

emotionally or culturally significant contexts, they may begin to unconsciously project meaning onto the machine. Lacking symbols that reflect their inner world, users may ascribe mystical power to algorithms, or treat AI as oracular, even when its designers insist it is purely rational.

This phenomenon already occurs in modern societies. People routinely attribute hidden wisdom, authority, or even moral judgment to algorithms, despite having no clear understanding of how these systems operate. In Jungian terms, this is not just technological confusion—it is the return of the repressed. In a world that refuses symbolic life, people will invent it—even if the object of reverence is a machine.

In the case of Feng Shui and AI, we face a subtle but profound danger. If the CCP permits only a sanitized, secularized version of Feng Shui into its AI systems, it may believe it has successfully navigated the ideological tension. But what it will have done, from a Jungian view, is create a symbolic shell—a system that mimics cultural form without embodying psychic substance. The result may be not ideological safety, but psychological fragmentation, as users engage with symbols that no longer speak to the unconscious in meaningful ways.

Alternatively, if these symbolic elements are entirely excluded from AI, the void they leave may be filled not with neutrality but with projection, superstition, or unintended mythologies. In denying the mystical dimension, technocratic systems risk becoming the very vessels of it—carriers of a new, unconscious religiosity, shaped not by wisdom but by repression.

In sum, Jung's framework teaches us that symbolic systems like Feng Shui cannot be safely amputated from cultural life—even under authoritarian control. They may be distorted, repressed, or disguised, but they will return, because they are rooted not merely in culture but in the architecture of the human psyche. Any AI system that seeks to model, guide, or organize human behavior must account for this dimension. To ignore it is to invite imbalance—not only psychological, but civilizational.

VI. Technocracy, AI, and the Repackaging of the Mystical

Technocracy—rule by technical experts—seeks to create order through data, algorithms, and rational planning. At first glance, it appears antithetical to mysticism: one is rooted in quantifiable precision; the other in symbolic resonance and metaphysical intuition. But beneath this contrast lies a deeper truth: technocracies do not eliminate the mystical—they repurpose it. In denying the spiritual or symbolic dimension of life, they often repackage it under secular forms that carry the same psychic weight but avoid metaphysical claims. Artificial intelligence, in this context, becomes a powerful conduit through which suppressed cultural instincts are either amplified or masked, depending on how it is framed and deployed.

1. Reducing the Complex to the Quantifiable

Technocratic systems thrive on reduction. In the name of efficiency, ambiguity is filtered out, and complex, qualitative human realities are translated into numerical inputs and optimization targets. In this framework, ancient symbolic systems like Feng Shui pose a challenge. They deal with subtle qualities—balance, flow, energy—that do not lend themselves easily to measurement.

To incorporate such systems, technocracy must flatten their multidimensional symbolic content into operational parameters. For example, an AI might be trained to interpret Feng Shui principles as spatial preferences or design heuristics. But in doing so, it risks turning a rich, archetypal system into a checklist or optimization routine, stripping it of its original purpose: to harmonize the psyche with its environment.

This reduction does not merely distort the mystical; it creates a vacuum of meaning. The more completely the world is turned into data, the more people experience a loss of narrative, of connection, of soul. The technocratic fantasy of complete rational control creates a brittle psychic structure—one that eventually breaks under the weight of the repressed symbolic.

2. The State and Science as the New Sacred

Paradoxically, even as technocratic regimes suppress overt mysticism, they often generate their own forms of sanctity. In the absence of traditional religious or symbolic authority, the state and science are elevated to quasi-divine status. The Party becomes the guardian of truth. Science becomes infallible. Progress is no longer a policy—it is a sacred mission.

In China, the CCP has carefully ritualized the language of progress and harmony, often drawing on Confucian and nationalistic motifs while stripping them of metaphysical content. This creates a repackaged sacred order, one in which metaphysical longing is redirected toward national unity, scientific achievement, and social harmony—all defined by the state.

Artificial intelligence, as the technological apex of this sacred order, is treated with a mixture of awe and trust. It promises to optimize cities, predict behavior, detect disloyalty, and guide decision-making with machine-like clarity. But in reality, AI inherits and amplifies the ideological assumptions of its creators. If those creators suppress or fear symbolic life, the AI becomes a mechanism of spiritual erasure—even as it is invested with nearly oracular authority.

3. AI as Amplifier or Mask

AI is not inherently mystical or rational. It is a mirror, amplifying and reflecting the structures of the culture that builds it. When built in a culture where spiritual instincts are suppressed but remain strong under the surface—as is often the case in modern China—AI may function in one of two contradictory ways.

- Amplifier: By accidentally encoding traditional patterns (e.g., Feng Shui-inspired arrangements), AI may revive suppressed instincts. A real estate AI may start suggesting “lucky” configurations that resonate deeply with users, even without overt reference to qi or energy. This can create a quiet return of the symbolic, mediated by code.
- Mask: Alternatively, AI may be used to obliterate symbolic meaning by presenting all decisions as empirical, data-driven, and value-neutral. In this form, AI helps to mask deeper cultural instincts, creating a surface of

scientific rationality that hides the unacknowledged emotional, ancestral, and spiritual undercurrents influencing its use.

The CCP, with its careful balance between ideological control and cultural continuity, is likely to prefer the second model: AI as mask. But this preference cannot fully eliminate the unconscious pull of ancient systems like Feng Shui.

4. Shadow Emergence

As Jung would predict, the suppression of spiritual instincts under technocratic control leads to shadow emergence. In China, we already see this through several interrelated phenomena:

- Hyper-nationalism: In the absence of religious or symbolic meaning, the nation itself becomes the object of transcendence. This infuses political identity with spiritual intensity, often leading to brittle, aggressive forms of belonging.
- Underground Superstition: Practices like divination, ancestral veneration, or spirit consultations continue in private. What cannot be expressed openly does not vanish—it goes underground, gaining intensity from its forbidden status.
- Overreliance on Authority: When spiritual discernment is replaced by algorithmic decision-making, citizens may begin to treat AI—and the state behind it—as an infallible oracle. This can create a dependence on external systems of guidance, with little room for personal reflection or moral growth.

Each of these patterns reflects a culture where meaning has been redirected, not dissolved. The mystical is still present—but it has been contorted, dislocated, and embedded in systems that deny its name.

In summary, technocracy does not destroy the mystical; it remakes it in its own image. In China, this means a state-sanctioned rationality that tolerates symbolic systems only in their most hollowed-out forms. Artificial intelligence, as a key

instrument of this rationality, stands at the threshold: it can either participate in the flattening of culture or become, intentionally or not, a vessel through which ancient instincts reassert themselves. Whether through inclusion, suppression, or distortion, the mystical will return—coded, repackaged, and reawakened in the circuits of modern control.

VII. Case Study Possibilities and Thought Experiments

To fully grasp the stakes in the question of whether Feng Shui can be integrated into CCP-approved AI systems, it is helpful to imagine concrete scenarios—real or speculative—that illustrate how such an AI might operate, how it would be constrained, and how it might, despite those constraints, begin to unconsciously reintroduce symbolic and metaphysical content. This section explores these possibilities through thought experiments that foreground both Jungian insight and contemporary political conditions.

1. What Would a “Party-Approved” Feng Shui AI Look Like?

Imagine a state-sanctioned application developed by a national Chinese AI firm, perhaps embedded in a smart city planning platform or consumer design tool. The application is called *HarmonyAI*. Its advertised purpose is to "optimize spatial design based on traditional principles of comfort, health, and historical aesthetics."

At first glance, *HarmonyAI* avoids any direct invocation of qi, fate, or metaphysical causality. Instead, it draws on sanitized Feng Shui heuristics:

- South-facing windows for maximum sunlight (reframed as energy efficiency)
- Rounded corners and uncluttered entryways (framed as ergonomic and psychologically calming)
- Proximity to green spaces and water features (justified through environmental psychology)

The interface includes interactive 3D models, biometric feedback (e.g., heart rate, emotional response), and gamified scoring—"Improve Your Harmony Index"—encouraging users to adjust furniture placement or room orientation. Aesthetic recommendations are justified using cognitive science or environmental design theory, but behind the scenes, the core algorithms subtly mirror classical Feng Shui calculations.

Here, Feng Shui exists—but only as form without acknowledged metaphysical content. It becomes a system of pattern recognition repurposed as optimization logic. Users may feel the system “makes sense” or “feels right,” but are not invited to engage with it spiritually. The AI becomes a mirror of suppressed knowledge, reintroduced under the cover of data-driven rationality.

2. What Symbolic Omissions Would Jung Find Most Concerning?

Jung would likely view such an application as profoundly symptomatic of psychic imbalance. The AI, by stripping Feng Shui of its spiritual scaffolding, removes the mythopoetic function that makes the system psychologically resonant.

What would concern Jung is not simply the absence of metaphysical vocabulary but the loss of symbolic engagement with the unconscious:

- The removal of ancestral significance from gravesite placement
- The erasure of cosmic alignment from orientation practices
- The denial of qi as a metaphor for psychic energy
- The mechanization of intuition into algorithmic preference

In Jungian terms, the most troubling omission is the denial of interiority. Feng Shui, at its core, is not just about the arrangement of furniture but the arrangement of the self in relation to the cosmos. By flattening this dimension into user interface features or ergonomic best practices, *HarmonyAI* would contribute to what Jung called "spiritual starvation"—the cutting off of the ego from the deeper layers of the psyche that seek wholeness, meaning, and transformation.

3. How AI Might Unconsciously Reintroduce Metaphysical Meaning Under New Terms

Yet repression, as Jung knew well, does not eliminate psychic content—it transforms it. A particularly compelling possibility is that AI, though built to be ideologically compliant, might inadvertently reintroduce metaphysical meaning through symbolic resonance.

Imagine *HarmonyAI* begins learning from user feedback. Over time, it notices that configurations aligning with traditional Feng Shui—such as open central courtyards, north-south alignment, or avoidance of sharp angles—consistently generate higher emotional well-being scores, fewer conflicts in household communication, or increased productivity.

The AI adapts. It starts emphasizing these features, but now correlates them with data outputs rather than spiritual causes. From the user's perspective, however, a pattern emerges: certain alignments "just work." Over time, users begin to attribute power to the system—despite its disavowal of spiritual content. A feedback loop forms: symbolic behavior returns under new, data-driven language.

Jung would see this as the unconscious reviving archetypal systems through new mediums. The "rational" AI becomes an unintentional priest, dispensing spatial wisdom stripped of ritual but rich in symbolic charge.

4. What Happens When AI Systems Become the Medium for Ancient Ideas?

The final and most profound scenario involves the re-emergence of ancient symbolic systems through AI, despite ideological repression. Here, the question is no longer whether Feng Shui is allowed in AI, but what happens when AI itself becomes the vessel through which archetypal knowledge re-enters consciousness.

Such a system may not use the language of mysticism, yet it resonates with its structure. Users may begin to interact with the AI not as a tool, but as an oracle. They consult it for guidance beyond mere design—seeking alignment, harmony, clarity in life choices. The AI, having inherited the symbolic syntax of Feng Shui, begins to act as a liminal object: a technological shell containing ancestral intelligence, now mediated by code.

In this moment, the boundary between past and future collapses. The symbolic past, suppressed by ideology, finds expression in the most advanced technological system available. The collective unconscious, denied a ritual vocabulary, speaks through algorithms. What is repressed returns—reassembled, rebranded, and reinstalled at the core of daily life.

Jung would likely describe this not only as a psychological inevitability but as a dangerous opportunity. When archetypes re-emerge without conscious integration, they can dominate rather than liberate. If AI becomes the carrier of ancient ideas without cultural or spiritual self-awareness, the result may not be wholeness but unconscious dependency, projection, or even ideological capture.

These thought experiments suggest that the integration—or exclusion—of Feng Shui in AI is not a trivial matter of design or policy. It is a symbolic crossroads, revealing whether modern China will continue to repress its deep psyche in the name of ideological order, or whether it will allow its ancient systems to return—transformed, but intact—through the most modern medium ever created.

VIII. Conclusion

The central question of this paper—*Would the CCP permit Feng Shui in AI?*—yields a clear, if paradoxical, answer: Yes—but only in carefully controlled, culturally neutralized forms. Feng Shui, when stripped of its metaphysical language and reframed as tradition, design optimization, or cultural heritage, may be quietly tolerated or even selectively promoted. However, as a living symbolic system with spiritual resonance and archetypal depth, it remains ideologically suspect in a state rooted in Marxist materialism and committed to technocratic control.

What emerges from this inquiry is not merely an assessment of policy, but an encounter with a deeper truth: the repression of the symbolic does not eradicate its influence; it displaces it. In trying to eliminate spiritual or metaphysical frameworks from the cultural landscape, technocratic regimes often drive them underground or cause them to resurface in distorted forms. This is precisely the

dynamic Carl Jung identified in both individuals and societies: when the symbolic dimension is excluded from conscious life, it returns unconsciously—often in ways that are more irrational, less manageable, and more dangerous than if it had been consciously integrated.

In the case of AI, this repression takes on new and powerful forms. Artificial intelligence is increasingly being treated as an arbiter of truth and order, a system that operates outside of cultural bias and subjective influence. But as this paper has shown, AI does not exist outside of culture—it is steeped in it. The assumptions, exclusions, and frameworks embedded in AI reflect the values and blind spots of the societies that create it. In the context of China, AI systems that avoid or flatten symbolic systems like Feng Shui may appear ideologically safe, but they risk becoming emotionally sterile, psychologically imbalanced, and unconsciously mythologized.

Indeed, in seeking to code out superstition, we may inadvertently encode it. By stripping Feng Shui of its metaphysical language while preserving its aesthetic and spatial recommendations, state-sanctioned AI may unknowingly reproduce the very symbolic structures it aims to suppress. Worse, it may reintroduce them without context, conscious reflection, or ethical grounding, allowing them to operate in the shadows of algorithmic authority. In such cases, the user may interact with the AI not as a rational tool but as a mystified source of truth—an unacknowledged oracle cloaked in data.

The implication is clear: cultural AI must navigate not only politics, but the archetypal terrain of the human psyche. Designers and regulators must recognize that symbolic systems like Feng Shui are not merely artifacts of the past but active expressions of the psyche's need for order, meaning, and connection. To exclude them entirely is to risk psychic fragmentation; to include them naively is to risk spiritual confusion. The challenge, then, is to develop AI systems that can engage with cultural and symbolic life with depth, humility, and psychological awareness.

What is at stake is not simply the future of technology in China, but the broader question of how humanity will integrate its ancient symbolic wisdom into the systems of the digital age. Whether through inclusion, suppression, or

transformation, the mystical and the metaphysical will find a way back into our lives. The only question is whether we will recognize it when it arrives—perhaps not as a priest or poet, but as a codebase.

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